

Message Text

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51

ACTION AID-59

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R 191015Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2575

INFO AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

UNCLAS NOUAKCHOTT 1108

AFDROUGHT

EO 1165: NA

SUBJECT: MAURITANIA GRAIN AIRLIFT

SUMMARY: KING GRAIN TASK FORCE COMMANDER COLONEL FASSETT, CHARGE AND AADO MET AUGUST 16 WITH GIRM MINHEALTH OULD BAH, DEPUTY GOVERNOR OF NEMA, CIVIL AVIATION SPECIALISTS, AND MAURITANIAN ARMY CAPTAIN CHARGED WITH GRAIN TRANSPORT COORDINATION TO DISCUSS PLANS FOR FORTHCOMING BAMAKO-NEVA AIRLIFT.

JTF COMMANDER EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT NEMA RUNWAY ASPHALT SURFACE--WHICH DAMAGED BY RAINS AND AIRLIFT OPERATIONS LAST YEAR--WOULD DISINTEGRATE PRIOR COMPLETION 200 PLANNED SORTIES 1974 AIRLIFT. MINISTER STATED PREFERENCE FOR SELIBABY AND AIOUN AS ALTERNATE DELIVERY POINTS SHOULD NEMA RUNWAY BECOME UNWORKABLE. HE INSTRUCTED ARMY TO DESPATCH 10 TEN-TON TRUCKS AND FUEL TO NEMA IN TIME FOR START AIRLIFT OPS, TENTATIVELY SCHEDULED BEGIN ABOUT 30 AUGUST FOLLOWING END MWI AIRLIFT. MINISTER NOED HE HAD RECEIVED FORMAL COMMITMENT FROM GOM SUPPLY 3,000 TONS GRAIN FOR MAURITANIA AIRLIFT AND REITERATED HOPES ALL 3,000 TONS COULD BE LIFTED INTO NEMA, WHERE STOCKS REMAIN DANGEROUSLY LOW. END SUMMARY.

1. JTF COMMANDER FASSET OPENED MEETING WITH OUTLINE HIS PLANS FOR NEMA AIRLIFT BEGINNING ON OR ABOUT 30 AUGUST.

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JTF PLANS DELIVER 15 TONS PER FLIGHT, WITH SIX SORTIES PER

DAY MONDAY THROUGH SATURDAY, AND THREE SORTIES SUNDAY, FOR PLANNED TOTAL 585 PER WEEK. JTF COMMANDER EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT POORLY MAINTAINED NEMA RUNWAY TARMACK WOULD DISINTEGRATE UNDER STRESS SOME 200 SORTIES NECESSARY COMPLETE 3,000 TON MISSION AND ASKED MINISTER INDICATE ALTERNATE DELIVER POINTS. HE ALSO REQUESTED GIRM MAKE NECESSARY PROVISIONS FOR FASTEST

OFF-LOADING OF AIRCRAFT IN ORDER ACHIEVE SIX SORTIE PER DAY TARGET. JTF COMMANDER PLANS NOTIFY GIRM OF FIRM START DATE FOR AIRLIFT BEFORE AUGUST 23.

2. FOR HIS PART, MINISTER REITERATED HOPES THAT ENTIRE 3,000 -TON AIRLIFT EFFORT COULD BE CONCENTRATED ON NEMA. HE SAID HE HAD RECEIVED FORMAL GOM COMMITMENT SUPPLY 3,000 TONS GRAIN. IF NEMA RUNWAY BECAME UNUSEABLE, HE WOULD WISH TO LIFT UP TO 500 TONS INTO SELIBABY, WHERE HE SAID FOOD STOCKS RUNNING LOW BECAUSE OF SCARCITY RIVER BARGE TRANSPORT. SECOND ALTERNATE WOULD BE SECOND REGION CAPITAL AIOUN, WHICH LIKE NEMA, LIES ONLY ONE HOUR'S FLYING TIME FROM BAMAKO.

3. WITH REGARD TO OFF-LOADING, STORAGE AND TRANSPORT AIRLIFTED GRAIN FROM NEMA TO OTHER FIRST REGION DISTRIBUTION CENTERS, MINISTER ASSURED US ALL NECESSARY MEASURES WERE BEING TAKEN. ZMA GOVERNOR HAS RENTED ADDITIONAL COVERED PRIVATE GRAIN STORAGE AND HAS ARRANGED FOR CREWS OFF-LOAD AIRCRAFT. MINHEALTH IS DESPATCHING 10 TEN-TON ARMY LORRIES TO NEMA ASSURE EVACUATION GRAIN FROM AIRSTRIP AND TRANSPORTATION TO OUTLYING DISTRIBUTION CENTERS. HE WILL SEND ADDITIONAL TRUCKS IF NECESSARY. ARMY WILL ASSURE ADEQUATE DIESEL MOTOR FUEL, BUT EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER LACK MECHANICS KEEP TRUCKS RUNNING. AT SUGGESTION MINHEALTH AND WITH CONCURRENCE PEACE CORPS DIRECTOR MAURITANIA, MISSION WILL ASSIGN PCV DIESEL MECHANIC TO NEMA FOR DURATION AIRLIFT OPERATION. IF DIESEL FUEL STORAGE BECOMES PROBLEM, JTF EXPRESSED WILLINGNESS AIRLIFT FUEL STORAGE TANKS--ON ORDER IN DAKAR--TO NEMA.

4. ACTING AADO AND CHARGE WILL FOLLOW-UP ON GIRM ARRANGEMENTS RECEIVE, STORE AND TRANSPORT GRAIN AIRLIFTED INTO NEMA. WE PLAN SEND AT LEAST ONE MISSION OFFICER TO NEMA FOR LIAISON DUTY DURING INITIAL AIRLIFT OPERATIONAL DAYS ALSO UNDERSTAND UNCLASSIFIED

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FFPO DAKAR IS TENTATIVELY PLANNING DESPATCH ONE OFFICER TO NEMA FOR SAME PURPOSE.

5. IN SEPARATE AUGUST 16 MEETING, JTF COMMANDER DISCUSSED PLANNED AIRLIFT OPERATIONS WITH SENIOR GIRM CIVIL AVIATION OFFICIALS, WHO PROMISINGFULL COOPERATION ON FLIGHT SAFETY AND NAVIGATIONAG MATTERS.

6. JTF C-1-0 DEPARTED NOUAKCHOTT ;900 AUGUST 17 WITH
15 TONS GRAIN AND MEDICINES TO BE OFF-LOADED AT NEMA ENROUTE
BACK TO BAMAKO. SHURTLEFF

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Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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